



May 1, 2014

To: Members of the House Committee on Local Government
Re: SB 354, "Grant's Bill"

Dear Members of the House Committee on Local Government,

Michiganders for Shelter Pets respectfully requests that you support SB 354, is also known as "Grant's Bill," to end the use of gas chambers in Michigan animal shelters.

Michiganders for Shelter Pets was created to bring together Michigan voters, animal shelters, animal protection agencies, Michigan businesses and Michigan professionals in a coordinated effort to advance the welfare of Michigan shelter pets. We speak for our citizen advocate group of over 2,500 Michigan voters and over 100 Michigan businesses and Michigan animal welfare professionals.

Only four shelters in Michigan continue to use their gas chamber (Branch, Berrien, Cass and Van Buren Counties). I have talked to the director/Sheriff in two of those counties & they stated that when their gas chamber breaks down next, they will not be fixing it and will be moving to EBI (euthanasia by injection). Not only have the vast majority of Michigan counties moved away from gassing to EBI, but many States are following suit rapidly. Last year Texas was added the growing list of states that ban the use of gas chambers. Pennsylvania & Alabama jumped on board just prior to that in late 2012. Michigan cannot and should not be left behind!

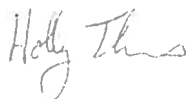
Funding is readily available to those counties to help with transition costs. There is funding available to safely decommission and remove the actual gas chambers. There is also funding available to train staff members on EBI. There will not be a cost to the remaining counties for the switch. EBI is also less expensive to use on a daily basis vs. gas chamber use.

Most importantly, the AVMA (American Veterinary Medical Association) updated their euthanasia guidelines this year. These guidelines are considered the gold standard for the animal welfare industry. **The Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development accepts the AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia as the authority on humane euthanasia and expects all individuals administering euthanasia to follow these guidelines.** The 2013 AVMA guidelines state that the AVMA no longer recommends gas for "routine euthanasia of cats & dogs." With that being said, it's imperative to pass SB 354 for Michigan to be in compliance locally.

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Thank you for your consideration. I hope that Michigan will soon be able to join the other forward thinking states that have banned gas chambers. I believe you will find that all Michigan shelters, animal care professionals, humane societies and national animal welfare groups agree that EBI is the gold standard and Michigan's shelter pets deserve the gold standard in death. We ask that you support this bill for Pure Michigan.

Sincerely,



Holly Thoms
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